

knowledge. I am confident these schools will continue to successfully meet their educational goals.

BILL TO ELIMINATE THE DISCRIMINATORY TREATMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA UNDER THE FEDERAL HATCH ACT

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 29, 2002

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing a bill to eliminate the discriminatory treatment of the District of Columbia under the federal Hatch Act. This bill would reverse the undemocratic and discriminatory inclusion of the District of Columbia, including its teachers, in the federal Hatch Act.

The introduction of this bill today follows the recent announcement by the U.S. Office of Special Counsel that the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board (Board) had granted its petition for the removal of Mr. Tom Briggs, a D.C. public school teacher at Dunbar Senior High School. Mr. Briggs lost his job after the Board found that he had violated provisions of the federal Hatch Act that apply only to the District of Columbia and no other local jurisdiction. These provisions prohibit D.C. public school teachers and other D.C. government employees from being candidates for partisan political office, despite the fact that teachers in the 50 states are exempt from the Act, and despite the fact that the District of Columbia is the only local jurisdiction in the Act treated as if it were a federal agency. In 2000, Mr. Briggs ran as the Statehood Green party candidate for Ward 2 Council Member.

My bill would remove discriminatory provisions in the federal Hatch Act that apply only to the District of Columbia and would exempt D.C. teachers, like the teachers from the 50 states, from the federal Hatch Act prohibition against seeking partisan elective office. The effective date of the bill is the year 2000, in order to remove Mr. Briggs' apparent violation of an antiquated, anti-home rule law that cannot be justified today. The Briggs case is particularly harmful because the victims of this inequity are not D.C. employees but the children in Mr. Briggs' class, who will face severe disruption to the continuity of their learning by having their popular and energetic teacher removed prior to the close of the school year.

My bill would leave the District to craft its own local laws in accordance with local needs and norms. It is certain that the D.C. City Council would enact its own local law to avoid any gap, and I have secured the commitment of the appropriate members of the Council to introduce and guide the local law to passage.

This is not the first time I have objected to discriminatory treatment of the District of Columbia under the federal Hatch Act. Nearly a decade ago, Congress passed the Hatch Act Reform Amendments of 1993, a bill which ended most of the limitations on political rights of federal employees. However, the bill contained perverse provisions that leave D.C. government employees alone among employees of the 50 states and the four territories under the federal Hatch Act. Although I was successful in keeping the District of Columbia

language out of the House version of the 1993 amendments, the Senate included the language. Opponents of Hatch Act reform blocked a conference on the House and Senate versions of the bill, where I had intended to press for the Senate to recede to the House's position. Consequently, the 1993 reform law passed ironically benefiting 62,000 federal employees who lived in the District and, if they taught at Dunbar could seek public office, yet punishing the 40,000 District employees targeted by the law. In my comments on the floor prior to passage of the 1993 bill, I said: "I serve notice now that I am not through today. I will not be through until, with the help of others in this House, I succeed in making District employees the equal of the employees of other state and local jurisdictions. Today, we must blush as we try to conceive of any justification for such disparate treatment. I pledge to work to eliminate the shameful distinction we create today."

After the 1993 fight, I subsequently introduced legislation in 1996 to free the District from discriminatory treatment under the federal Hatch Act. It has not been possible to move appropriate legislation since, largely because no overall review of the Hatch Act, where such changes are generally made, has occurred. However, in light of the Briggs termination, I am asking the House to pass a stand alone bill.

The case of Mr. Briggs simply brings home the sad fact that the District of Columbia, and particularly its school teachers, have been singled out in a manner that is a complete affront to fairness, democratic principles, and self government. I urge my colleagues to support this bill to eliminate the discriminatory treatment of the District of Columbia under the federal Hatch Act in order to remove this unjust anomaly without delay.

**THE RETURN OF AN ANCIENT
HATRED**

HON. BARNEY FRANK

OF MASSACHUSETTS
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 29, 2002

Mr. FRANK. Mr. Speaker, one collateral disturbing aspect of the current crisis in the Middle East is the rise in anti-Semitism in various parts of the world. It is particularly distressing to see the virulent outburst of this vicious prejudice in Europe, where many of us had hoped that the terrible experience of the past formed a stronger barrier against it.

Obviously people have a right to be critical of particular policies of the government of Israel in a given time. Indeed, since Israel continues to be a vibrant democracy even in the face of the violence now occurring in that part of the world, some of the most trenchant criticisms of Israeli policy come from Israelis themselves. But there is a sharp line between expressing differences with particular actions of the Israeli government and expression of anti-Semitism, and, sadly, that line has been crossed far too often in recent months in Europe.

In a very well reasoned editorial on Saturday, April 20, the New York Times speaks out cogently against this renewed anti-Semitism. Because this is such a well reasoned and powerful statement on a subject of great im-

portance to us in our deliberations, I ask that it be printed here.

THE RETURN OF AN ANCIENT HATRED

When many in the Muslim world blamed Israel and its supposed desire to discredit Islam for the Sept. 11 attacks, most Americans dismissed the report as a deformed joke. But just as the attacks forced Americans to face the fact that there are deadly serious groups seeking to destroy us, so some of the anti-Semitic actions in Europe in recent months cause us to wonder whether, six decades after the Holocaust, we are witnessing a resurgence of the virulent hatred that caused it.

Expressions of sympathy for the Palestinians or criticism of the Israeli military campaign in the West Bank are of course entirely appropriate. What is troubling are hateful statements and actions like the bombs thrown at Jewish schools, centers and groups in France, or the Orthodox Jews beaten on the streets of Belgium and Berlin or the truck bomb driven into the ancient synagogue in Tunisia. We worry that such actions, largely by Muslim extremists, touch a historic chord in Europe that is not being confronted.

Israelis have been too quick, over the years, to view criticism of their government as motivated by anti-Semitism. But it is hard to think of another word for the way some critics of Israel's policy toward the Palestinians are expressing their opposition. The dark of shadow of Europe's past seemed to be reappearing when the liberal Italian daily *La Stampa* depicted a baby Jesus looking up from the manger at an Israeli tank, saying, "Don't tell me they want to kill me again." Or when a Lutheran bishop in Denmark delivered a sermon in the Copenhagen Cathedral comparing Ariel Sharon's policies toward the Palestinians to those of King Herod, who ordered the slaughter of all male children under the age of 2 in Bethlehem.

Political opinion in Europe is certainly one-sided when it comes to the Mideast conflict. Members of the Norwegian Nobel committee have publicly called for the withdrawal of the Peace Prize from the Israeli foreign minister, Shimon Peres, but not from his co-winner, Yasir Arafat. The European Parliament voted to urge member governments to impose trade sanctions on Israel but urged no action against the Palestinian Authority. Historically, the far right and far left have not agreed on much. These days they seem united in their contempt for the Jewish state.

This was evident last summer at the international conference against racism in Durban, South Africa, which turned into a celebration of Israel hatred. Zionism was once again equated with racism and Israel's legitimacy came under repeated attack.

Focusing on the suffering of only one side is also not the same as anti-Semitism, although it is distressing. Just as there are American politicians who believe they have no political room to maneuver when it comes to support for Israeli policies, so there are European politicians with large Muslim constituencies whose voters do not want to see them acknowledging gray areas in this fight. There are also other explanations for the European mood. Guilt over the Holocaust may be salved with the thought that Jews, too, can act with cruelty. And given American sponsorship of Israel, being fashionably anti-American can easily mean being anti-Israel.

But much of Europe has a special responsibility to be cautious. Its cultures are drenched in a history of anti-Semitism. The mixing of historic European anti-Semitism with the more modern version in the Muslim world is a dangerous cocktail.

All this does not mean that Israel should be above criticism. Far from it. But it does